Year	Crude Oil Production (MMT)
1994-95	3.808
1995-96	3.528
1996-97	2.290

(c) and (d) ONGC has hired consultancy services for studying the behaviour of some non-performing wells of Neelam Field for suggesting remedial measures. Government has not taken any decision to enter into strategic alliances with Multinational Companies for the renewal of this field.

Deduction of Employees' E.P.F. Amount by O.N.G.C.

3587. SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUMDAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the O.N.G.C. is deducting E.P.F. amount from employees and has not yet implemented the employees pension scheme under Act No. 25 of 1996;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what action the ministry has taken so far and which authority has given relaxation to the O.N.G.C. in this regard;

(d) whether Government would take any action against the O.N.G.C. for the violation of Act No. 25 of 1996; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) O.N.G.C. Ltd. has applied to E.P.F. authorities for exemption from the purview of the Employees pension Scheme, 1995, under clause 39 of the

3588. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG connections in Andhra Pradesh as on 31st December 1996, district-wise;

(b) the number of applications pending in the State, district wise.

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have taken a decision to sanction eight lakh new LPG connections in the country; and

(d) if so, the number of gas connections proposed to be allocated, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The LPG customer population enrolled with the distributors of Public Sector Oil Companies in the State of Andhra Pradesh as on 1.1.1997 was about 20.49 lakhs.

(b) The number of persons in the waiting list registered with the LPG distributors of the Public Sector Oil Companies in the State of Andhra Pradesh as on 1.1.1997 was about 10.74 lakhs.

(c) Government had approved release of 20 lakh new LPG connections during 1996-97, out of this, release of 8.5 lakh new LPG connections were approved for the period January 1997 to March 1997.

(d) New LPG connections are released in a phased manner throughout the country, depending upon the availability of LPG, new customer enrolment plan, waiting list, slack available with the distributors of the area and their viability. LPG is not an allocated product and no advance allocation is made.

Import of Kerosene and LPG

3589. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to allow import of kerosene and LPG in the country during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) SKO & LPG are deficit products in the country. In order to meet their demand in the country, Government approval is given annually to import of these products for sales under administered prices. A quantity of 3396 TMT of SKO and 1464 TMT of LPG has been proposed to be imported by PSUs during the current financial year. Both SKO & LPG are decanalised items and are also imported through parallel marketing.

West Coast Refinery Project in the Ratnagiri District

3590. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a delay in the West Coast refinery project coming up in the Ratnagiri district;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that there are no disruptions in the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R.BAALU): (a) to (c) The Oman Oil Company (OOC) the Joint Venture Partner with HPCL in the West Coast Refinery Project, have decided to review their interest in Hindustan Oman Refinery Project in view of their various commitments.

A joint venture enquity participation from suitable partner (s) is being vigorously explored by HPCL.

Supply of Natural Gas for Ceramic Complex

3591. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to provide natural gas to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for development of ceramic complex;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to provide natural gas to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for development of ceramic complex as the gas projected to be available is fully allocated and it is not feasible to make additional allocations at present.

Discovery of New Gasfields by International Experts

3592. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are unable to increase indigenous natural gas supplies unless new gasfields are discovered; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have been unable to discover new fields on their own; if so, the reasons for not inviting international experts for this purpose?

THE MINIISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R.BALLU): (a) The production of natural gas in the country has gone up from around 49 MMSCMD in 1992-93 to around 62 MMSCMD in 1996-97. The production is estimated to go up further to around 85 MMSCMD by the end of the 9th plan period.

(b) ONGC and OIL have added around 45 billion cubic metres of recoverable gas reserves in the first four